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USDA RELEASES NEW GEOSPATIAL DATA PRODUCTS

New Satellite Images Show Ag Land Cover for 2008 Crop Year

WASHINGTON, July 23, 2009 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) today released new satellite images depicting agricultural land cover for the 2008 crop year. The images, referred to as the Cropland Data Layer (CDL), identify geospatial crop locations in three U.S. regions: the Mid-Atlantic and, for the first time, the Southwest and Southeast.

The CDL information is a useful tool for projects ranging from monitoring crop rotational patterns, land use change and environmental modeling, to water resource and carbon emission management. Agribusinesses and farmers, as well as government, researchers and academic institutions, use the CDLs to study pesticide risk, epidemiology, transportation, fertilizer usage and potential, market data analysis and carbon dioxide fluxes.

The Mid-Atlantic region is the largest CDL and covers Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia. The Southwest region CDL includes Arizona, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming, while the Southeast region CDL is comprised of Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina and Tennessee.

NASS produced the CDLs using satellite images observed at 56 meter (0.775 acre) resolution and collected from the Resourcesat-1 Advanced Wide Field Sensor (AWiFS), Landsat Thematic Mapper and Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS). The collection of images was then categorized using on-the-ground information including field location, crop type, land cover, elevation, tree canopy and urban infrastructure.

The entire inventory of CDL products, including metadata and accuracy assessments, is available online at the USDA National Resource Conservation Service's Geospatial Data Gateway (http://datagateway.nrcs.usda.gov) and the NASS website (http://www.nass.usda.gov/research/Cropland/SARS1a.htm)

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